

C 65-14-7a

Honorable William J. Crockett
Deputy Under Secretary for
Administration
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

Dear Bill:

In accordance with our recent conversation, there is enclosed a draft Executive order which would authorize the award of the Purple Heart to civilians in situations not now authorized. The proposed amendment to paragraph 1. of Executive Order 11816 renders that Order applicable with respect to all departments and agencies of the Government. Those situations such as the recent bombing of our Embassy in Saigon would be covered. The addition of in item (f) in paragraph 1. is designed to cover situations in which injuries or deaths occur as a result of riots and disorders at United States installations, such as USIA libraries and others. While this latter proposal is not of prime interest to this Agency, it seems consistent with the desire to cover persons not serving with the military. To some degree the latter amendment alters the historical concept of the Purple Heart by permitting it to be awarded in nonmilitary actions. Since many of these riots have clear political, cold war overtones, we believe the proposed concept is justified.

Executive Order 11816, the current Order of the Purple Heart, was made retroactive to April 5, 1947. I assume it would be difficult and perhaps impossible for all agencies of the Government to research their activities that far back in order to apply the Purple Heart authority. However, it would seem the enlarged authority should have some retroactive application, in particular to cover the Saigon Embassy bombing. It might be desirable to apply the new authority retroactively to the effective date of Executive Order 11816, namely, April 5, 1947.

I enclose for your reference copies of Executive Order 12816 and Executive Order 12449 which are the recent Executive Orders authorizing the award of the Purple Heart.

Sincerely,

L. K. White
Deputy Director
for Support

Enclosures

OGC/RHL:cdh (28 May 69)

Chl - Addressee w/encs

1 - R/Pers

1 - OGC

2 - DDC

1 - NMAB

OGC Subj. w/basic

RHL Signer

Chrono.

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